

The Harmonious Consent
OF THE
MINISTERS
OF THE ~~21~~

Province within the County Palatine
OF

LANCASTER,
VVith their Reverend Brethren,
the *Ministers* of the Province
of L O N D O N,

In their late *Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ,*
and to our *Solemn League and Covenant :*

As also against the Errours, Heresies, and Blasphemies of these times, and the Toleration of them.



Reprinted at *Edinburgh* by *Evan Tyler*, Printer
to the Kings most Excellent Majesty. 1648.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
LIBRARY



THE
HARMONIOUS CONSENT
OF THE
Ministers of the Province
WITHIN THE
County Palatine of Lancaster, &c.

IT is a saying of *Solomon* worthy to be written in letters of gold *That a friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity* ^a: And therefore though God need not the witnels of men, nor truth our Testimony, yet when his Name is blasphemed, the truth contradicted and opposed; the faithfull friends of God, and the sincere lovers of the Truth, will (as in all ages they have done) stand up in his cause, which they then see in such apparent Hazard. In the Scriptures we read of a *cloud of Witnesses* ^b that appeared for God, and bare witness to his Truth, though for so doing some of them had *tryal of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonments* ^c, &c. In the Apostasie of the ten Tribes *Elijah* and *Elisha* were zealous for God against the false Prophets of

^a Prov. 17. 17.

^b Heb. 12. 1.

^c Heb. 11. 36, 37, 38.

Baal. Jeremy at Jerusalem, and Ezekiel in Captivity bore witness against the whoredoms of the house of Judah, as is most evident throughout their whole Prophecies. Peter and the other Apostles, though commanded not to teach any more in the Name of Christ, yet did not therefore forbear, resolving rather to obey God then men d. The two witnesses prophesied one thousand two hundred threescore days, all the while the Gentiles did tread under-foot the holy City e. Arrius met with great Athanasius, and when the whole world wondered at it felt that it was become Arrian, the general Council of Nice f met and laid an anathema on that pernicious Heresie. In latter times God had many in this Land, who loved not their lives unto the death g, & gave Testimony to the Truth, not in ink but in blood, and who (though they be dead) yet speak h, as their names will live for ever. When the Complices of Arminius grew many, some from the several reformed Churches convened in the general Synod of Dort, and condemned his pestilentious Errours. And yet more lately, The i designs of Priests and Jesuits, and other adherents to the sea of Rome against the true Reformed Protestant Religion in his Majesties Dominions established, the introducing of divers innovations and superstitions into the Church, together with the driving out of multitudes out of his Majesties Dominions, amongst other reasons brought forth the Protestation, for the defence, as of other things, so also of the true reformed Protestant religion expressed in the Doctrine of the Church of England, against all Popery & Popish innovations within this Realm, wherein not onely the Parliament it self
 was

d Acts 5. 28.

e Rev. 11. 2, 3.
 f Concenerant
 autem prater
 innumerabiles
 diaconos ac
 Presbyteros
 Episcopi nu-
 mero trecenti
 et octo decem,
 viri & uirgines
 sanctitate &
 miraculis et
 divinarum
 scripturarum
 scientia plane
 admirabiles,
 &c. Binnius
 vol. 1. pag. 261
 g Rev. 12. 11.
 h Heb. 11. 4.
 i See the Pre-
 face to the
 Protestation
 May 5. 1641.

was engaged, but according to the *k* Order and *l* Vote of the House of Commons, the generality of the Kingdom were engaged too. *The in calling to*

minde the treacherous and bloody plots, conspiracies, attempts and practises of the enemies of God against the true Religion and professors thereof in all places, especially in these three Kingdoms ever since the Reformation of Religion, and how much their rage, power

and presumption had been of late, and were at that time increased and exercised, did in a great triall of affliction

on n, induce these Kingdoms to enter into a Solemn League and Covenant, as for other things, so also for the defence and Reformation of Religion and Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresie, Schisme, and Profaness, &c. by which, &c. the Protestation and Covenant, as there was care taken for the better defence of the truth, so there was also a glorious confession of it made before God, Angels and men. And now when men of perverse spirits and corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith had resisted the truth 1 Cor. 8. 2.
this stirred up the zeal of our reverend and godly Brethren, the Ministers of the Province of London, to give Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ.

And therefore that we the Ministers of Christ within the Province of the County of Lancaster, may in something fil up the measure of the Testimony of them that have gone before us, considering that we

k See the Order of the House of Commons May 5. 1641. concerning the printing of the Preamble and the Protestation, and sending down the Copies printed by the Knights and Burgeses, who were to intimate with what willingness all the Members of the House made the Protestation, and further to signifye, that as they justifye the taking of it in themselves, so they cannot but approve it in all such as shall take it. *l* See the Vote of the House, July 30. 1641 wherein they declare, that what person forever shall not take the Protestation is unfit to bear Office in the Church or Common wealth.

m The Preface of the Solemn League and Covenant, published Sept. 27. 1643.

cannot but be sensible of the strange and wofull Apostasie of sundry from the Faith; the great opposition made against the Government and Discipline of Jesus Christ; the sad Divisions and Rents in this tattered and torne Church; that an universall Toleration of all, even the most execrable doctrines that ever were hatcht in hell or broached in the world, is earnestly laboured after by many; and that the Solemn League and Covenant, sworn with hands lifted up to the most high God, is with many buried in oblivion, as it is not only neglected and slighted, but also contemned, scorned, derided, and most palpably violated and trampled on by not a few; and that its manifest that God is hereby shamefully dishonoured, most highly provoked, neighbour Churches justly scandalized, all fundamentall and saving Truths in danger to be plucked up by the roots, and our severall Flocks to be poysoned with the spreading Errours of the times.

p The Father
is called *The*
God of Truth,
Deut. 32. 4.
the Son *the*
truth Jo. 14. 6.
the holy Ghost
the spirit of
truth, 1o. 14. 17
q Prov. 23. 23.

r 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2.
s Ezek. 33. 7;
8, 9, 10.

The claim that is laid to Truth by the three glorious Persons in the blessed Trinity *p*; the high price and account that is worthy to be set upon it, being to be bought *q* though at never so dear a rate (however now a dayes esteemed of with many as a refuse commodity) the high thankfulness we owe to God for keeping Truth so chaste and pure so long under an adulterous Church-Government; the trust reposed in us by Jesus Christ as his messengers, embassadors and stewards of the mysteries of the Gospel, of whom it is required that they should be faithfull *r*; the duty we owe to our severall Flocks as being Watchmen *s* to give them warning, and that as standard-bearers

we

(7)

we may encourage them earnestly *to contend for the faith once delivered to the Saints*; the care over their immortall souls redeemed *with the precious blood of Christ*; the conscience of our Solemn League and Covenant binding us in our places to endeavour the Reformation of Religion, and the Extirpation of the contrary; our fears lest the Reformation so earnestly longed for, so joyfully covenanted, so much suffered for, and of late times so much bled for, should after so many sharp throws, and such hard labour, prove an abortive birth; the worthy, renowned and much encouraging example of our Reverend Brethren the Ministers of the Province of *London* going before us (and whom to follow in witnesse-bearing to the Truth, and so far as they follow Christ w^e, we count it but our duty) The multitude of them that in these dayes do oppose the Truth, by whose great numbers it is in danger to be born down, if contrary endeavours to the utmost be not used by the united strength of all that love it, to hold it up; and lastly, that we may wash our hands from the guilt of betraying by our sinfull silence so precious a treasure as Truth is, and may not judge our posterity unworthy thereof for our sakes, if we should not own it, plead for it, and hold it fast: These things, we say, in this juncture of affairs, do draw us forth publickly to declare our selves in those main things witnessed to by our Brethren in their late *Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ*, and to our Solemn League and Covenant, as also against the Errors, Heresies, and Blasphemies of these times, and the Toleration of them.

1 Pet. 1. 18,
19.

1 Cor. 11. 1.

I. As

I.

As touching the necessity of a platform of Doctrine or Confession of Faith, we shall need to say nothing, it having been found so usefull for the Church in all Ages, from the primitive times even untill now, not only that the ignorant might thereby be informed concerning the main points needfull to be known and believed by them unto salvation, but also for the better preserving of the truth, detecting and discovery of Hereticks and Seducers, and to testify consent and agreement in that one Faith.

Here only we think it needfull to declare, that we do highly approve of *The humble Advice of the Reverend and learned Assembly of Divines, concerning a Confession of Faith*; judging it not only to be orthodox, sound, solid, substantiall, and pious, but also to be very full, and in especiall manner usefull for these times, as that which doth obviate those many dangerous Errors that do swarm in this Age: and therefore as we do assent unto the whole, so we also do con-

x See the Testimony to the truth of Jesus Christ, pag. 3.

concur with the Reverend Assembly, and our x Reverend Brethren the Ministers of the Province of London, in our humble and hearty desires that it may receive the approbation and sanction of Authority, as the joint Confession of Faith for these three Kingdoms in pursuance of our Covenant.

II.

In the next place, we do hereby openly professe before God and the world, that we cannot but tremble

ble and be amazed to consider, that in a Land engaged in such a Covenant; professing so much for Reformation; made partakers of so many special mercies as *England* hath been; such blasphemous, execrable and horrid doctrines should ever be publickly broached, printed, maintained and defended as are at these times. We shall not need to recite them particularly, because that work is so fully done already to our hands by our Brethren in their late Testimony; although to the great grief and wounding of our hearts we may declare, that as they onely there intended to give a *small taste of their wormwood and gall*, so we are assured their Catalogue of Errours might be much augmented, if there were any necessity to rake any further into the dunghil-books whence they might be gathered, and that many more authors might be quoted, to make it more fully evident; that there are indeed such Errours and Heresies amongst us as are by them recited. But here we cannot but blush, wonder and be astonished at our strange revolt. We remember the times when under the Prelatical tyranny, Arminianisme, Antinomianisme, and the Innovations that were introduced into the worship of God, were generally cryed out against by all that party which was then esteemed truly religeous: but now, as though Errours and Heresies had changed their natures, and were grown better because the persons professing, patronizing and countenancing them in these dayes pretend to more piety and holiness then was to be found in the Fautors of them heretofore, such kinde of Errours as would then have been abhorred by

B

every

See the Catalogue of Errours in the Testimony to the Truth of Iesum Christ, Page 5, to 25. *ibid.* p. 25.

every one truly conscientious: to the great dishonor of God, scandall of Religion, and shame of our Church and Nation, do now take sanctuary and shroud themselves under the shadow of many of those that challenge to themselves the name of the godly party.

And as we cannot but take notice of the just hand of God out against us in setting open the flood-gates to let in the sea of Errour, wherewith this Church is in danger to be overthrown, thereby to punish our former luke warme and coldnesse in defence of the truth, unprofitablenesse under the meanes of grace, disesteem and slighting of the Truth, *our not valuing as we ought the inestimable benefit of the Gospel; our not labouring for the purity and power thereof, and not endeavouring to receive Christ in our hearts, nor to walk worthy of him in our lives, which are the causes of other sins and transgressions so much abounding amongst us;* so we, cannot but expresse our deepest sence hereof and sorrow for the same; this alone being sufficient to move us to rouse our selves in the dust, to rent our hearts and not our garments; as the

a See the Ordinance of the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament concerning the growth and spreading of Errors, Heresies and Blasphemies, setting apart a day of publike Humiliation to seek Gods assistance for the suppressing and preventing the same, and which was ordered by the Lords to be printed Die 10th, Feb. 4. 1646 and to be carried down by the Sheriffs and under-Sheriffs, and delivered to the severall Ministers of every parish Church and Chappel within this Kingdom, who were required to take notice of the same.

Honourable Houses of Parliament hereupon saw cause both for themselves and the whole Kingdom to be humbled for the growth of *Errours Heresies and Blasphemies* when they published their Ordinance *ato* that purpose: As also for to seek Gods assistance for the *suppressing and preventing of the same*

same, and which put us in hopes that there would have been long before now an application of some effectual means of remedy. And although we cannot but from the bottom of our hearts lament, and pity all those that are intangled in the dangerous and deadly snares of the Errours of these times, yet considering that unsound and heretical doctrine will eat as doth a *b* : Tim. 2. 17. canker b or gangrene; and therefore doth manifestly tend to the razing down to the ground the true Christian Faith, the extirpating of all true Religion and the power of godlinesse, the paysoning and undoing of precious souls; is the pest of a Church; the weed that will over-grow Gods garden, and so choak the plants of the Lords own planting; doth highly provoke God to anger; and that the fuliginous vapours thereof which have of late risen up out of the bottomlesse pit (as they have greatly eclipsed) so are they in danger to grow into thick clouds to the utter darkening of the heavens over our heads, that we should not behold any more the light of the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ; we do therefore hereby testify with our Brethren *c* Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ, page 33. to all our flocks, to all the Kingdom, to all the Reformed Churches, as our great dislike of Prelacy, *Erastianisme*, *Brownisme* and *Independency*; so our utter abhorrency of *Antiscripturism*, *Popery*, *Arianism*, *Socinianisme*, *Arminianisme*, *Aninomianisme*, *Anabaptisme*, *Libertisme*, and *Familisme*, with all such like now too rise amongst us; and more particularly all those Errours witnessed against by our Brethren, and recited by them in their Catalogue of infamous and pernicious Errours in their late Testimony.

And we do hereby, as the Watchmen of God and

- Ministers of Jesus Christ, give warning to our severall Flocks *d*, That they take heed of the wolves in sheeps clothing, of all *e* false Teachers that do privily bring in Damnable Heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction, and that therefore they follow not their pernicious wayes, that *f* the way of Truth may not be evil spoken of; that *h* if any man come unto them and bring not the doctrine of Christ, they receive him not into their house, neither bid him God speed; that so they be not partakers of their evil deeds; that *g* they mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which they have learned, and avoid them: And do earnestly exhort them in the bowels of Jesus Christ, That they labour to get sound knowledge, and to be well grounded in the principles of the Oracles of *h* God (the warrant whereof is the cause why so many are seduced and turned aside, and being i but children in understanding are tossed to and fro, and carryed about with every winde of doctrine by the sleight of men and cunning craftinesse of those that lie in wait to deceive) *k* that they search the Scriptures with those good Bereans whether those things they hear be so or no; *l* that they beleieve not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false Prophets are gone out into the world; *m* that they despise not prophesying, but yet prove all things, and hold fast that which is good; *n* and that speaking the truth in love, they grow up into Christ in all things which is the head: Most humbly beseeching *o* the God of our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory, that he would give unto all his people the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: *p* That he would grant unto them according to the

d Math. 7. 15
e 2 Pet. 2. 1.

f 2 John 1. v.
10, 11

g Rom. 16. 17

h Heb. 5. 12.
i Eph. 4. 14.

k Acts 17. 11.

l 1 John 4. 1.

m 1 Thes. 5.
20, 21.

n Eph. 4. 15.

o Eph. 1. 17.

p Eph. 3. 16.

the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man, that they may be kept from every evil way of errour and sin, and may alwayes have something to say for the truth, and nothing against it; that all those that go astray may be brought into the way of truth, and that we our selves, our severall Focks, and the whole Church of God every where may be found blamelesse at the day of Christ. And however we cannot but for the present deplore the sad condition of the Church of God in this Kingdom, in respect of the poysonful Errours it is infected with, yet we hope that that God which often works by contraries, making scandals the tryal and triumph of his chosen, is for the present doing his people good by the means of Errours growth, thereby trying their sincerity and love to truth, stirring them up to prize it the more, and more to search after it. *There must be Heresies*, saith the Apostle, *that they that are approved may be made manifest* q. Open enemies and false brethren (by the wise ordering of God, who can make sovereign mithridate of the flesh of vipers) do always advantage the Church.

And we do further trust, that when God, by his thus suffering the growth of abominable and pernicious Errours for a time, hath thereby fully accomplished the work he hath to do upon the hearts of his people, he that knows how to bring light out of darknesse, order out of confusion, good out of evil, as he made the pride and tyranny of the Prelates the meanes to cast them forth, so also in much mercy to *England* will at length, by this most unlikely and contrary means in it self, make the Reformation

q 1 Cor. 11. 19.
 r Non verum
 docendo quod
 neciunt, sed
 ad verum qua-
 rendum carna-
 les, ad verum
 aspicendum
 spirituales Ca-
 tholicos exci-
 tando. August.
 de vera relig.
 tom. 1. cap. 8.

mation of these Kingdoms much more thorough and glorious.

III.

But before we passe on any further, we are here led to expresse with what astonishment and horreur we are struck when we seriously weigh what endeavours are used for the establishing of an universal Toleration of all the pernicious Errours, blasphemous and heretical doctrines broached in these times, as if men would not sin fast enough except they were bidden; or as if God were not already enough dishonored except *the throne of iniquity* were set up, *framing mischief by a Law*; or as if men were afraid that Error (a goodly plant to be cherished) would not grow fast enough except it were made much of; or as if it might as justly lay claim to the priviledge of being defended as truth it self; or as if there were danger that Satan would not destroy souls enough, except he might do the same without all restraint. For our own parts, as we can never sufficiently admire and wonder that any that have taken the Solemn League and Covenant, should either have so quickly forgotten it, or else imagine that the establishing a Toleration of Heresie and Schisme by a Law, should be the way to extirpate them; so also here we shall take occasion to declare what our apprehensions are concerning such a Toleration.

We have searched the Scriptures, looked as impartially as we could into those authentick records, and yet we cannot finde that ever such a thing was practised

practised with approbation from God, from the time that *Adam* was created upon the earth unto the sealing up of the sacred volume, the ceasing of visions and all new divine revelations. But on the contrary, that those were blamed, reprehended and checked, that did but connive and wink at the practise of those things that were displeasing unto God; that the not taking away the high places is mentioned to be a defect in their Reformation, of whom yet God himself gives Testimony, that their hearts were upright *u*; and that those that quite took all away what ever was distasteful to him, were by God himself highly honored and much commended *w*: And therefore we cannot see how such a kinde of Toleration as is endeavoured after in these times can any ways consist with a thorough Reformation according to the Word of God, there being nothing more contrary to Reformation then Toleration.

1 Rev. 2. 14.
15. 20.
11 King. 15.
14 2 Chro.
33. 17.
17 2 Chro. 17.
6. & 31. 1. and
34. 3. 4

Besides what else would this be but a setting up the image of jealousy that provokes to jealousy *x*, and a putting upon God (who knows how many) corrivals. *x* Ezek. 8. 3.

It would be a giving Satan free liberty to set up his thresholds by Gods thresholds, and his posts by Gods posts *y*, his Dagon by Gods Ark, which how dishonorable it would be to God and Jesus Christ his onely Son, we leave all men to judge. They that search diligently cannot finde in it love to God, or love to his Truth, or love to mens precious souls; Nay, it strongly favours of leaving of first love *z*, which Christ hates, of luke-warmlesse and want of zeal, for which Christs threatens to spue out of his mouth *a*, of love to Errour, and an apprehension of some

1 Rev. 2. 6.

1 Rev. 3. 16.

some amiableness and worth therein for which it were to be desired, or else why should there be a pleading to have it tenderly dealt with and indulged: even as it argued a love to *Baal* in them that pleaded for him against *Gideon*, because he had cast down his

b Judg. 6, 30,

31.

altar and cut down the grove that was by it *b*. It would be no part of *Englands* thankfulness unto God, after so many deliverances and mercies received from him, to grant men open liberty to blaspheme God at their pleasure, wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction *c*, trample upon his holy Ordinances, sleight and condemn all Ministry, despise his Messengers, commit all manner of abomination, and for every one to go a whoring after his own inventions, which yet would be the effects of a lawlesse Toleration.

c 1 Pet. 3. 16.

Add yet further, that a Toleration would be the put-

d If there were a company of mad men running up and down the streets with knives and swords in their hands endeavouring to mischief and kill, must we do nothing to restrain them? *Burroughs heart-divisions*; Page 24. See more in him there to this purpose at large.

e The devil must not be let alone though he get into mens consciences, God hath appointed no City of refuge for him: if he flee to mens consciences as *Joab* to the horns of the altar, he must be fetcht from thence, or slain upon there: something may be done to men to keep them from evil, and to reduce them notwithstanding the plea of their consciences. *Burroughs heart-divisions*. Page 29, 30. See him there also more at large.

ing of a sword into a madmans hand *d*: a cup of poyson into the hand of a child: a letting loose of mad men with firebrands in their hands; an appointing a City of refuge in mens consciences for the devil to fly to *e*; a laying of the stumbling block before the blind; a proclaiming liberty to the wolves to come into Christs fold to prey upon his lambs; a Toleration of soul-murther (the greatest murder

of all other,) and for the establishing whereof, damned souls in hel would accurse men on earth. Neither would

would it be to provide for tender consciences, but to take away all conscience; if evil be suffered it will not suffer good; if Errour be not forcibly kept under, it will be superiour; which we here the rather speak of, to undeceive those weak ones, who under the specious pretext of liberty of conscience (though falsely so called, and being indeed, as is well observed by the generall Assembly of the Church of Scotland, *Liberty of Error, Scandal, Schisme, Heresie, dishonouring of God, opposing the Truth, hindering Reformation, and seducing others*) are charmed by Satan into a better liking of an unconscientious Toleration. We also dread to think, what horrid Blasphemies would be belched out against God; what vile abominations would be committed; how the duties of neereſt relations would be violated; what differences and divisions there would be in Families and Congregations, what heart-burnings would be caused; what disobedience to the civil Magistrate that might be palliated over with a pretence of conscience as well as other opinions and practises; what disturbance of the civil peace, and dissolution of humane society, and of all Government in the Church and Common wealth, if once Liberty were given by a Law (which God forbid) for men to professe and practice what opinions they pleased; yea, sin would be then committed without any restraint or shame, although the more liberty to sin the greater bondage. The establishing of a Toleration, would make us become the abhorring and loathing

f See the Declaration and Exhortation of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to their Brethren in England, Page 4.

g. Perinix enim in doctrina fidei dissenſo et diffraſtio totius ſocietatis humana perturbacionem ſecum trahit, ejuſque tranquillitatem ſubvertit. Synopſis purior. theolog. diſp. 50. theſ. 61.

of all Nations, and being so palpable a breach of our Covenant, would be the high road way to lay *Englands* glory for ever in the dust, and awaken against us the Lord of hosts to bring a sword upon us to

b Lev. 26. 25. *avenge the quarrel of his Covenant* h. A Toleration added to our sins would make us to God an intolerable burthen; he would doubtelesse think of easing himself, he would be weary of repenting. And when Jesus Christ should come to judge both quick and dead, the very lukewarm Prelates whom Christ hath spued out of his mouth (who in their times would never have consented to such a Toleration as is now desired) would rise up in judgment against us & condemn us. And therefore how-

i And from brethren, in things of the mind, we look for no compulsion, but that of light and reason; in other things God hath put the sword in the Parliaments hands for the terror of evil doers, and the praise of them that do well, &c. See a Letter sent to the House of Commons and printed 1645. going under the name of Oliver Cromwell and set down by Mr. Rutherford in his survey of the spirituall Antichrist, page 250. part 1.

ever there are some *i* that do conceive that in things of the mind the sword is not put into the hand of the civil Magistrate for the terror of evil doers and the praise them that do well; Yet because we judge the Toleration of all kind of opinions

and professions in matters of Faith (Errors therein being in the number of those evil works to which the Magistrate is to bee a terror *k*) to be impious and wicked, and would be a tender nurse to give suck to and cherish the foul, ugly, monstrous and mis-shapen births of our times, as it would be also destructive to the Common wealth, though we shall easily grant, men are not to be punished by the Magistrate for their internall opinions which they do not disco-

** Rom. 13. 3, 4*

discover /, yet with our reverend Brethren we do here profess to this Church, and to all the Churches of God throughout the whole world, *That we do detest the forementioned Toleration m.* And what ever others may expect to the contrary, yet we hope that God will never suffer the Parliament of *England* ever to be so unmindful of either their Solemn League & Covenant, or of their own former Declarations and Remonstrances n, Protestations & Professions, as once to give a listening ear to such as might move for such a thing, and that they might be kept from being guilty of so great a sin, shall be our earnest prayer for them to God continually night & day.

l *Idem non adspiciamus qui sicuti, hominum cogitationes liberas esse aiunt, ita quorumlibet de fide opiniones a magistratu tolerandas esse arbitrantur, quamvis enim internas hominum opiniones nanasse pariter deus largiatur, impiam tamen ac reipublice exitialem religionis profanationem a magistratu quibuslibet Civibus esse promittendam negamus.* Synops. purior. theolog. disput. 50. thel. 60.

m See a Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ, page 34.

n *The honorable House of Commons do thus remonstrate, They insule unto the people that we mean to abolish all Church Government, and leave every man to his own fancy for the service and worship of God,----- And then afterwards they declare; And we do here declare that it is far from our purpose and desire to let loose the golden reins of Discipline and Government in the Church, to leave private persons or particular Congregations to take up what form of divine service they please, for we hold it requisite that there should be throughout the whole Realm a conformity to that order which the Laws enjoyn, according to the Word of God. See the Remonstrance of the State of the Kingdom Decemb. 15. 1641.*

IV.

And thus having expressed our deepest fence concerning the Errours and Heresies of these times, and the Toleration of them, which to us is so hateful and abominable, we are now carried on to declare what we conceive to be the cause of the spreading of our fretting leprosie and eating gangrene.

If we make inquiry into our selves, we must needs acknowledge, our not prizing truth as we ought, not

Improving precious opportunities for good that have been put into our hands, the great decay of the power of godlinesse, leaving first love, lukewarmnesse, sleighting and undervaluing the means of grace, and barrennesse under them, (faults, generally to be found in the better sort of people) together with the many other grievous sins that are committed in the Land, are just causes why we should be scourged with such a spirituall plague; but yet these hinder not but that we may also as truly number, the not settling a well ordered Church Government for so long a time after the old rotten building was pulled down, amongst the causes of the growth and spreading of pernicious Errours. Anarchy will cause confusion in the Church as well as in the Commonwealth. And therefore we do professe, that without a well ordered Church Government, that we here

* See the Exhortation of the general Assembly of the Church of Scotland, page 12. where they use these expressions in reference to the Presbyteriall Government, which we do also with them fully and freely own.

may use the words of the general Assembly of the Church of Scotland o, *we know no other proper and effectual remedy against the present dangers of Religion in this Kingdom, or for*

purging the Church from Scandals which are destructive either to sound doctrine or godlinesse; and are therefore thankfull to the Parliament for ordaining of late, the speedy division of all the Counties of the Kingdom

* See the Ordinance of Parliament for the speedy dividing and settling the severall Counties of this Kingdom into distinct Classicall Presbyteries, and ordered to be printed Jan. 29. 1647.

into Classicall Presbyteries*: Discipline and Government in the Church being *the golden Reins* (whereunto also this present Parliament hath well likened

likened it) serving to curb and restrain men, who are by nature *like a wilde asses colt* p, affecting unbridled liberty; it is the rod wherewith to correct petulant and froward children; the shepherds crook which the faithfull Pastors cannot want, but to the spirituall prejudice of their flocks; the keyes opening the doors for the admittance in of those whom Christ would have to be admitted into his Church, and the shutting out of whom he would have kept out; it is the hedg or wall to keep the ravenous beasts from entering into Gods garden and vineyard; the means to *take the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines* q, and to purge out the *leaven* that otherwise, though but little, yet *would leaven the whole lump* r. And if not a little Family, no Common-wealth or

q Cant. 2. 15.

r 1 Cor. 5. 6.

society of men can consist without the bond of Laws or Discipline s, how can it be expected but want of Church Government will soon bring the Church to ruine: Therefore seeing Government is so necessary for the Church, we cannot but judge, that the want of it, for so long a time, hath been and is one main cause of those great evils with which this sick & languishing Church is so much distempered. And as wee are fully perswaded, with the Reverend and learned Assembly of Divines, from clear Scripture grounds *That the Lord Jesus as King and head*

t Si nulla societas imo nulla domus quæ vel modicam familiam habeat contineri in recto statu sine disciplina potest, eam esse multo magis necessariam in ecclesia cujus statum quam ordinatissimum esse decet. Calvin lib. 4. instit. cap. 12. lect. 1. Sicut nec familia nec respublica nec ulla humana societas sine legum & discipline vinculo consistere potest, ita nec ecclesia Christi sua integritas in hoc mundo potest constare, nisi certo regimi, atq; eidem legibus sit adstricta; per quæ ordo ejus & cuncta adversus carnis, mundi satana, fraudes ac miliones inviolatè conservetur. Synopsis purior. theolog. Disp. 48. thes. 1.

s Isaiah 9. 6, 7. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Acts 20. 17.
28. Heb. 13. 7, 17, 24 1 Cor. 12. 28. Mat. 28.
18, 19, 20.



See the humble advice of the Assembly of Divines concerning a Confession of Faith. c. 30. sec. 1 p. 53.

See the humble advice of the Assembly concerning Church-Government, pag. 3.

See a Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ, p. 24.

of his Church, hath therein appointed a government in the hand of Church-officers distinct from the civil Magistrate u, and that it is he upon whose shoulders the government is, who sits upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it and establish it with judgement and justice from henceforth even for ever, having all power given to him in heaven and in earth by the Father who raised him from the dead and set him on his own right hand, and put all things under his feet w. So also with our reverend Brethren the Ministers of the Province of London x, we are well assured that Jesus Christ hath sufficiently revealed in his Word how he will have his Church governed now under the New Testament: and that the Presbyteriall Government (truly so called) by Presbyteries and Synods in a due line of subordination of the lesser to the greater (with prosperous success exercised in the best reformed Churches) is that Government which is most agreeable to the mind of Jesus Christ revealed in Scripture

And if this Government were but fully established and settled throughout this Kingdome, we doe not doubt but through the blessing of God in the sincere and faithfull exercise thereof, the mists that do at present overshadow and obscure this Church would be soon dispelled; the Errours that do boldly walk up and down without controll, would not dare to peep forth; or if they did, would be soon suppressed; loosenesse & profanesse would be more restrained, the power of godlinesse more advanced, many scandals prevented and removed, sundry stumbling blocks would be taken out of the way of the weak, to the healing of our divisions; and so the Spouse of Christ, that at present is black over, would look with another

another manner of face then now she doth. The experience of the Reformed Churches, and especially of *Scotland*, confirms the successfulness of this Government abundantly for the weeding up of Errours, and keeping the Church of Christ chaste from being drawn aside to commit spiritual fornication with the idols of the brain. We also our selves in the exercise of this Government, according to those cautions and considerations premised by us \approx , have to the praise and glory of God cause to acknowledge it in some measure successful amongst us in the exercise of that part thereof that is already settled, for the stirring up of the ignorant to endeavour after more knowledge, and the restraining of the scandalous; but much more fruit we apprehend would be reaped from it, if in all the parts thereof it were in its full force established. But in the mean time, we cannot but bewail that there are so many that are prejudiced against it, do asperse it, speaking evill of what they understand not, and that sundry do not onely refuse to submit to it themselves, but do with tooth and nail oppose and hinder the establishing of it in the Kingdom. Here also we do further signifie, that we cannot only our selves submit to what the reverend and learned Assembly of Divines have presented to the Honorable Houses of Parliament, as their humble advice concerning this Government (judging it to be very consonant to the Word of God, and well agreeing with the Government and Discipline of other reformed Churches) but doe also unfeignedly and heartily desire, in pursuance of our Covenant, that the three Kingdoms may be brought to that uniformity for Discipline

See the deliberate Resolution of the Ministers of the Gospel within the County Palatine of *Lancaster*, with their grounds and cautions according to which they put into execution the Presbyterial government upon the present Ordinances of Parliament. *Preston*, November, 17. 1646.

Discipline and Government that is advised to there, not without much regret disapproving of the new-coined titles of distinction of a Scottish and English Presbyterie.

V.

a See the Ordinance of Parliament, Feb. 2. 1643. for the taking the Covenant.

b See the Exhortation for the taking the Covenant, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed Feb. 9. 1643.

As for our Solemn League and Covenant for the defence of our Religion, and to endeavour Reformation, we cannot but here call to mind the manifold encouragements given us to take it, it being (when it was by Authority pressed upon us) *thought a fit and excellent meanes to acquire the favour of almighty God towards the three Kingdoms a* : and for the better encouraging of all sorts of persons to take it, was by the Parliament, in the tenth instruction for the taking of the Covenant, *recommended to the Assembly of Divines to make a brief Declaration, by way of Exhortation, to all sorts of persons to take it, as that which they judged not only lawfull, but (all things considered) exceeding expedient and necessary for all that wish well to Religion, the King and Kingdom, to joyn in, and to be a singular pledge of Gods gracious goodnesse to all the three Kingdoms, and was accordingly urged by the Assembly, as the soveraigne and only meanes to recover an embroiled bleeding remnant b* : And yet further, that in the Declaration of both Kingdoms joyned in Arms, ordered to be printed Jan. 30. 1643. such as would not take the Covenant are declared *to be publike enemies to their Religion and Country, and that they are to be censured and punished as professed adversaries and Malignants*. All which, as they did lay strong engagements on us to take

take it, so to see it so urged and pressed, made our hearts within us to leap for joy. We remembered our servitude and bondage under the Prelaticall Task-masters, how the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship had been corrupted, and this Covenant for Extirpation of Popery, Prelacy, Superstition, Heresie, Schisme and Profanenesse, and for Reformation of Religion in Doctrine, Discipline, Government and Worship, not only recommended, but also commanded, and so strongly pressed by the Higher Powers to be taken throughout these three Kingdoms, did in the midst of our troubles, at that time lying on us, mightily revive and cheer our drooping spirits, and was as *life from the dead* c. We also shall never forget, how the taking of this Covenant was by our selves pressed and urged on our severall Congregations, how solemnly it was sworne, and what rejoicing there was at the Oath, sundry at the taking of it weeping for joy. And when the Covenant was thus taken, we thought within our selves that surely now the Crown is set on *Englands* head; we judged the day of entring into this Covenant to be *Englands* Coronation day, as it was the day of the gladnesse of our hearts, and wherein God wiped away the reproach cast upon us by Separatists before, for the want of an expresse Covenant. We do also remember, how Copies of this Covenant were sent abroad into neighbouring reformed Churches, by whom as they were received with great joy, so doubtlesse then their expectations were raised, to see *England* shortly brought neerer unto them in a thorough Reformation according to the Word of God, those things be-

c Rom. 11.15.

ing abjured which had been formerly as a partition-wall set up betwixt them and us And let us never let slip out of our minds, how God from heaven smiled upon our Armies, from the first day of entring into this Covenant, untill through the good hand of our God upon us for good, the whole power of the Enemy was quite broke in pieces; and therefore it so soon as we have reaped such fruit and benefit from it we cast it away, who knows but we may be forced to take it up again to save our lives? And yet for all this, we wish we had not cause for to complain, that this Covenant thus strongly urged, thus solemnly sworne, thus blessed with successe, is contemned,

d The first thing you complain of under the head of omission is no lesse then the Solemn League and Covenant, and here you do abound with your pathetick interrogations to affect the hearts of those whose eys are in their bowels, whose understandings are drowned & swallowed up in their passions, after this manner. And *shal the Covenant, w^{ch} is as solemn a Vow which creatures on earth can make to God in heaven, &c.* And again, *shall the Covenant for the preservation &c.* And again (like the Papists which hold up their idolatrous Eucharist in the eyes of the people, that they may fall down to worship it) *shall the Covenant which both Houses recommended to the Assembly of &c.* Yet again (as if here lay all your bait to catch gudgeons) *shall our mutuall and solemn League and Covenant subscribed by the Parliaments of both Kingdoms &c.* Once more yet (or if this spring fails all our sport will be lost) *shall the Covenant even with those that took it be already out of date? &c.* Scottish mist dispeld, pag. 22.

sleighted, most palpably broken, scorned and derided. Where an holy and religious Covenant, once made, is regarded as it ought, it will be reverently spoken of, neither will the earnest and pathetick pressing the not casting it away be any matter to quarrell or scoffe at. And yet besides sundry other unfavoury and reproachfull expressions used, tending plainly to bring the Covenant into disgrace, (to say no worse of them) *d* some there are that liken the earnest and often pressing of not laying aside the Covenant to

the practise of the Papists holding up the idolatrous Eucha-

Eucharist in the eyes of the people that they may fall down and worship it. The Covenant binds to endeavour Reformation according to the Word of God, and to bring the Churches in these Kingdomes to neereſt uniformity in matters of Religion: and yet the earneſt preſſing Uniformity, according to the Covenant,

is made by ſome e, a ſubſtituting *the Solemn League and Covenant in the room of the Oracles of Heaven, a ſetting up of mans poſts, the Covenant, by Gods poſts, the holy Scriptures; and is compared to the Jew having his Talmud, the Turk his Alcharon, the Papiſt his Maſs book, the Prelate his Service book.* Which kind of expreſſions and comparisons, as we cannot but with greateſt indignation deſteſt and abhor, ſo in that they ſet the Covenant (that makes the Word of God the rule of all Reformation and Uniformity that is ſworn to there) at hoſtile oppoſition with the Word of God, it is very evident to what purpoſe they tend, ſc. that the Covenanted Uniformity in matters of Religion ſhould not be inſiſted on or urged, for that were to ſet up *mans poſts, the Covenant, by Gods poſts, the holy Scriptures, and were to be like the Jew having his Talmud, the Turk his Alcharon, the Papiſt his Maſs book, &c.* and therefore the concluſion is, *better it is that this brazen ſerpent ſhould be broken in pie-*

*e But ſeriously, why do you make the Solemn League and Covenant the uniformity, the bulwark of your Uniformity, and the golden ſeed to meaſure your temple: you have not a title of the Word of God, but all your title is the Solemn League and Covenant in ſtead of the Word of God, the Jew hath his Talmud, the Turk his Alcharon, the Papiſt his Maſs book, the Prelate his Service book, and muſt we have the Solemn League and Covenant in ſtead of the Oracles of Heaven, the Word of God? Better it is that this brazen ſerpent ſhould be broken to pieces and ground to powder, then that men ſhould fall down and worſhip it. It was the hypocriticall Pharifees pretending to heaven, though minding the earth, who making void the Law of God did teach for doctrines the tradition of the Elders; let us not put up mans poſts, the Covenant, by Gods poſts, the holy Scriptures. *Scott's* *miſt diſſelled*, page 26; 27.*

ers and ground to powder, then that men should fall down and worship it, though formerly an healing benefit was received from it. Are not these plain evidences in what mean account the Covenant is with some persons, when the earnest pressing the not laying it aside is so scorned and floated at, and when the urging of covenanted Uniformity will not be endured? And is not this Covenant also most palpably broken, when not only Uniformity is cryed out against, but a Toleration of all kind of Errours, Heresies and Scisms, in stead of endeavours to extirpate them, is earnestly pursued by divers? to say nothing of the great increase of Errours of all kinds, the woful divisions and rents in the Church (which never were more or greater then since the Covenant was taken) nor of the abominable loosnesse and prophanessee of the times, which certainly is not for to amend our lives; and each one to goe before another in the example of a reall Reformation, according as was professed and promised.

For these things wee see cause to hang down our heads and blush, and that our eyes should run down with teares continually, as our hearts at the consideration hereof may bee astonished and swallowed up with grief: Oh what dishonour is hereby brought to God! What scandal given to Religion! What matter of reproach and scorn is this like to be unto us from our common enemy! What an unparalel'd blot is hereby laid upon this Church and Nation, never like to be washed out in this Age nor in the Age of our children after us! and what danger of swift destruction, if there be not repentance in time! May not the Lord complain of us, as once he did of *Israel*,
When

When (f) he slew them, then they sought him, and they re- p. 1. 8. 34.
 turned and enquired early after God; and they remembered 31. 16. 37.
 that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer;
 nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and
 they lyed unto him with their tongues, for their heart was
 not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his Cove-
 nant. And may it not be said of us, as in the dayes
 of Josiah it was said concerning treacherous Judah
 that had made a solemn Covenant with God for Reforma-
 tion (g), that she turned not to God with her whole heart, 2. Chron. 34.
 but feignedly (h). And besides all this, neighbour 21. 12.
h Jer. 3. 6. 10.
 Churches take notice of our strange breach of cove-
 nant, and are amazed at it. Our dear brethren of
 Scotland, who upon our taking this Covenant were
 induced to imbarque themselves with us, and runne a
 common hazard in the same cause, do sadly com-
 plain (i) of the crying sin of breach of Covenant--- and
 that the staves of beauty and bands, Covenant and bro-
 therhood are broken by many in this Kingdom, and are
 much cast down in themselves and grieved, fearing
 least they should lose the fruit of all their sufferings
 and hazards for our sakes, *sc.* the establishment of Re-
 formation and Uniformity in Religion in these three
 Kingdoms according to the Word of God, and ex-
 ample of the best reformed Churches; and which,
 notwithstanding all suggestions whatsoever to the
 contrary, we dare neither be so injurious nor uncha-
 ritable towards them, as not to judge was the main
 end by them proposed when they first engaged
 with us; especially when we consider whence came
 the first stirrings of the wheels of Christs chariot in great
 Britain of later times, and who it was that first sounded

i See the Ex-
 hortation of the
 general Assen-
 bly of the
 church of Scot-
 land to their
 Brethren in
 England, page
 5. 6. 7.

1. Mr. Ruther-
ford in his
survey of the
spiritual Anti-
christ, in the
Epistle to the
Reader p. 6.

1. Neh. 10. 29.
2. Jer. 50. 5.
3. Pl. 7. 10. 37.
4. King. 17. 15.
5. Jer. 11. 10.
6. Lev. 26. 25.
Deut. 29. 20.
21, 22, 10. 25.
Jer. 22. 8, 9.
2. King 6. 7.

the retreat to return from Babylon, which posterity will know to the second coming of Jesus Christ, though we should not own it, of which we are modestly put in remembrance by one (k) whose name is famous throughout the Churches whilest he is alive, and whose works will abundantly commend him to posterity when he is dead. The things that have been already mentioned in reference to breach of Covenant, are matter of deepest sorrow to our hearts, especially if we do further consider what guilt of perjury (l), spirituall adultery (m), high treason against the God of heaven is hereby brought upon our land; and that also breach of Covenant is a thing which God complains of (n), threatens severely (o), and for which he hath insisted fore Judgements on his people in former times p. As for our selves, though we cannot excuse our selves from failings against our Covenant, for which we desire unfeignedly to be
 15. *humbled; yet considering that for the matter of it, there is nothing in it to be repented of, but that the seed of Reformation and the foundation of the house of the Lord is in it; and knowing also how solemnly, with hands lifted up to the most high God, it was taken, and that it was made with the Almighty who will not be mocked, and in his presence who is the searcher of all hearts, with a true intention to perform the same as we shall answer at the great day when the secrets of all hearts shalbe disclosed; we do therefore by the grace of God resolve, that we will not suffer our selves either directly or indirectly, by whatsoever combination, perswasion or terror to be ever withdrawn, either in whole or in part, from this sacred League and Covenant,*
 that

that was so solemnly and cheerfully sworn by us, in the time of *Englands* low estate and sad hour of temptation, *but shall, all the dayes of our lives, zealously and constantly continue therein against all opposition, and promote the same according to our power, against all lets and impediments whatsoever*, being fully assured there is none on earth that hath that power over our consciences, as to discharge us at their pleasure from the bond of this sacred Oath; and that therefore the parties engaged in it, whatever some mens intentions might be when they took it, and however the common enemy (whose prevalency and power, together with our low condition in this Land before, did first occasion the entring into it) be now suppressed, are notwithstanding still as firmly bound to their utmost to endeavour, according to their places, the performance of all the severall things therein contained and sworn, (and that yet have not received their accomplishment because the war's ended) as at the first taking of it. & therefore, though we

cannot but heartily lament, that any should be so strangely deluded as to conceive so much, yet we do abhor that it should be so much as once imagined, that when the common enemy is suppressed, this Covenant then forthwith should be out of date, and but like an *Almanack of the last year*, shewing us rather what we have already done, then what we be now to do. And because, as when it was first enjoyed

q First, I do not conceive the parties to that League intended thereby to be everlastingly bound each to other, the grounds of striking it, being merely occasional for the joyning in a war to suppress the common enemy, accordingly we did joyn: the enemy is (if we be wise) suppressed, and the war (as you see) ended; what should the Covenant do, but like an Almanack of the last year, shew us rather what we have already done, then what we be now to do. See the *Independency of England* endeavoured to be maintained by Henry Marten, a member of the Parliament there, &c. page. 11.

to be taken, it was thought a fit means to acquire the favour of God; so we now are fully perswaded, being kept and observed, it would make *England* the delight of God, the rejoycing of all true hearted Saints at home and abroad, a corasive and vexation to the Devil, Antichrist, all Popish prophane and Malignant persons at home and abroad, and a mirrour of incomparable mercy. We shall therefore (as by the Order

1 Die Veneris, Jan. 29. 1644. Ordered by the Commons Assembled in Parliament, that the Solemn League and Covenant be on every day of Fast and publique humiliation, publickly read in every Church and Congregation within this Kingdom, and that every Congregation bee enjoyned to have one of the said Covenants fairly printed in a faire letter, in a table fitted to hang up in some publike place of the Church, to be read.

f See the humble Advice of the Assembly of Divines concerning a Confession of Faith. Chap. 22. Sect. 4. page 40.

and adherence to it. And as with the Reverend Assembly of Divines, *f* we are assured, *that an oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words without equivocation, or mental reservation,* adjudging the

2 See the Reasons of the present judgement of the University of Oxford concerning the Covenant &c. p. 22. 23.

u See the Testimony to the Truth of Jesus Christ. page 28.

contrary opinion to lay a certain foundation for the eluding all oathes, as such a *salvo* as this, that the Covenant may be taken in mens own sense, hath given occasion to some to except against the taking of it; so what ever any others may conceive to the contrary, with our Reverend Brethren, the Ministers of the Province of *London* *u*, we do firmly believe, *That neither this nor any other oath is otherwise to bee interpreted, then according to the common, plain and true grammatical*

nominal sense of it, accounting it a most absurd and wicked perverting of it, when it is so interpreted, as to engage to defend and maintain any kind of Religion whatsoever, without any enquiry at all how orthodox it is, if *established by them who have all the authority that is visible to choose for themselves*, (which is the construction that is put upon it

by some that profess to have taken *it*) God having never given such an absolute power to any men on earth to establish what religion they please, and to require from any sort of persons in any Kingdome whatsoever ; (who are all to render an account to God for themselves) that they should maintain and defend it upon such establishment, without any enquiry at all whether it be according to the Word of God or no ; as also, because the Covenant according to this interpretation might be made the bond of iniquity, to maintain and defend such Religions as are flat contrary to the Word of God, as *Judaisme*, *Turcisme*, and even *Paganisme*, yea *Popery* it self, although by Covenant wee bee expressly bound to endeavour to extir-
 pare

Secondly, what would it do were it renewed and made perpetual ? thus much it saith in my opinion and no more ; whenever you shall be violently hindered in the execution of that Religion you had amongst you at the time of the engagement, and shall require our assistance, we must afford it you for the removall of that violence. In like manner, when we shall be hindered in the exercise of that Religion which we according to the Covenant shall establish here, upon request to you made for that effect, you are tyed to assist us. And so throughout all the other clauses respectively & equilly, carrying this along with you, we are hereby obliged to the reciprocal defence of one another, according to the declaration of the party wronged in any of the particulars there comprised, without being cavilled at or scrupled by the party invoked, whether your Religion be the same it was, or ours the same it should be ; whether the bounds of your liberties or ours be not enlarged beyond their then-line, whether your Delinquents or ours be justly so or no. For, the native Rights of both people being the principall, if not the only thing we looked on when we swore, we do not keep our oath in preserving those rights, if we do not allow this master-right to each severall people, namely to be sole Judges within themselves ; what religion they will set up, what kind of lawes they will have, what size, what number of Magistrates they hold fit to execute those laws,

and what offenders to be tryed by them. Hereupon, you know, we did not enquire at all how orthodox your Religion was before we vowed to maintain you in it, that is in the quiet possession of it, [not in the theologic or truth of it, a business for an University perhaps, not for a Kingdome] being well assured it was established by them who had all the authority that is visible to chuse for themselves, and could not without apparent breach of order, and injury to fundamentals be disturbed in the exercise of what they had so chosen. See the Independency of England endeavoured to be maintained by Henry Marten a Member of the Parliament there, &c. pag. 11, 12.

x Either 4. 14.

pare it; if established by them who have all the authority that is visible to choose for themselves.

And therefore, we are sure this can be none of those *native rights* of the people of any of these Kingdomes, which we looked on when we swore, and which by this Oath or Covenant we are obliged to preserve.

Thus, fearing lest if we had altogether held our peace at this

time x, God might have sufficiently have vindicated his truth by other instruments, but for our baseness judged us unworthy to be intrusted any longer with so precious a treasure as Truth is; we have therefore chosen rather to approve our selves faithfull to God, by joyning hands with our Brethren (who have witnessed such a good confession in giving such a public and open Testimony to the *Truth of Jesus Christ, To our Solemn League and Covenant, and against the Errours, Heresies, and Blasphemies of these time, and the Toleration of them*) though for so doing we should be never so much persecuted by men; than by our sinfull silence seem to be ashamed either of Christ, his Truth, or faithfull Servants, boldly standing up in the cause of our great Master, although thereby we might be assured to gain the whole world.

And now having discharged our consciences, however our actions may be misconstrued by some, yet we knowing our witness is in heaven, and that
God

God is the righteous Judge, we do not doubt but the testimony of our consciences (that herein we have aimed at nothing but the glory of God, the defence of his Truth, the health and recovery of this bleeding Church, the casting some discountenance upon the raging Errours of these times, and to testifie our adherence to our Solemne League and Covenant) will abundantly support us against the worst of evils that can befall us for witness-bearing to the Truth.

Subscribed the 3^d. of *March* 1647. by us,

Richard Heyrick Warden of Christ-Colledge in
Manchester.

Richard Hollinworth Fellow of Christ-Colledge in
Manchester.

Alexander Horrocks Minister of the Gospel at *Dean.*

John Tilsley Pastor of *Dean.*

John Harper Pastor of *Bolton.*

Richard Goodwin Minister of the Gospel at *Bolton.*

Richard Benson Minister of *Chollerton.*

William Als Minister of *Bury.*

Robert Bash Pastor of *Rashdal.*

E 2

William

William Assheton Pastor of *Middleton*.
John Harrison Pastor of *Ashton* underline.
Thomas Pyke Pastor of *Radcliff*.
John Angier Pastor of *Denton*.
William Walker Minister of the Gospel at *Newton-
 heath* Chappell.
Toby Furnesse Minister of the Gospel.
John Joanes Minister of *Eccles*.
Edward Woolmer Minister of *Flixton*.
Robert Gilbody Preacher at *Holcome*.
Jonathan Scholesfield Minister at *Heywood*.
Thomas Holland Minister of *Ringley*.
Thomas Clayton Minister of *Didsbury*.
Robert Constantine Minister of *Ouldham*.
Peter Bradshaw Minister of *Cockey*.
John Brierly Preacher at *Salford*.
Thomas Johnson Minister of the Gospel at *Halsal*.
William Bell Pastor of *Nyton*.
William Dun Minister of the Gospel at *Ormeskirk*.
James Worrall Pastor of *Aughton*.
Will. Aspinwall Preacher of Gods word at *Mayhall*.
John Mallinson Min. of Gods word at *Melling*.
Robert Seddon Minister of Gods word at *Atker*.
William Norcot Minister of *West-Derby*.
William Ward Minister of the Gospel at *Walton*.
Nevil Kay Pastor at *Walton*.
Henry Boulton Preacher at *Hale*.
John Fogge Pastor of *Liverpoole*.
Joseph Tompson Minister of *Sephton*.
Jo. Kyd Minister of *Much Crosby*.
James Bradshaw Pastor of the Church at *Wigan*.
James Starkey Pastor of *North-mooles*.

James

James Wood Preacher of the Word at *Ashteten* in
Makerfield.

Robert Yates Pastor of the Church at *Warrington.*

Bradley Hayhurst Preacher of the Word at *Leigh.*

Thomas Norman Pastor of *Newton.*

Timothy Smith Preacher of the Word at *Rainferth.*

John Wright Pastor of *Billinge.*

Henry Shaw Pastor at *Holland.*

Thomas Crompton Minister of the Gospel at *Astley.*

William Bagaley Minister of the Gospel at *Burtonwood.*

William Leigh Preacher of the Word at *Newchurch.*

Richard Mawdesley Pastor of *Ellins.*

James Hyet Pastor of *Croston.*

Thomas Cranage Pastor of *Brindle.*

Edward Gee Minister of the Gospel at *Eccleston.*

Paul Latham Pastor of *Standish.*

Samuel Foanes Pastor of *Hoole.*

Henry Welch Minister at *Chorley.*

William Brownsword Preacher at *Dugglas.*

James Crichley Preacher at *Penwortham.*

Edward Fleetwood Pastor at *Kirkham.*

Isaac Ambrose Pastor of *Preston.*

William Addison Lecturer at *Preston.*

William Ingham Minister at *Goosenarghe.*

Matthew Moore Minister at *Broughton.*

Christopher Edmundson Pastor at *Garstang.*

Thomas Smith Preacher at *Garstang-Chappell.*

John Breres Minister at *Padiam.*

Richard Jackson Pastor at *Whittington.*

Nicolas Smith Pastor of *Tatham.*

Robert Shaw Pastor at *Cockeram.*

James Scholecroft Minister at *Cason.*

Thomas

Thomas Whitehead Pastor at *Halton*.
Peter Atkinson Minister of *Ellel*.
John Faques Minister of *Bolton*.
Richard Walker Minister of *Warton*.
Philip Bennet Minister of *Ulverston*.
William Smith Pastor of *Over-Kelley*.
Brian Villan Minister of *Coulton*.
Peter Smith Minister of *Shirehead*.
Edward Aston Minister of *Cloughton*.
Thomas Denny Minister of *Wiredale*.
Thomas Fawcett Minister at *Overton*.
William Garner Preacher of the Gospel.
John Smith Minister of *Melling*.

FINIS.
